

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE**  
**EXECUTIVE ORDER**

Subject:		Number:
OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY		2007-04
Date:	By Direction of:	
May 21, 2007	 Edward G. Rendell, Governor	

- WHEREAS, racial and ethnic minorities and urban and rural populations in Pennsylvania suffer from poorer health status and outcomes; and
- WHEREAS, health disparities exist in the incidence and mortality rates for heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, infant mortality and HIV/AIDS, as well as obesity and other preventable disease; and
- WHEREAS, health disparities occur by gender, race and ethnicity, education and income, disability, geographic location and/or sexual orientation; and
- WHEREAS, the prevention and early treatment of diseases is impacted by health disparities resulting in additional human, social and economic costs; and
- WHEREAS, the diversity of the Pennsylvania population may be one of the Commonwealth's greatest assets, it also presents a range of health improvement challenges that must be addressed by individuals, the community and agencies throughout the Commonwealth; and
- WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Health is working with academic institutions, community based organizations, state agencies, health partners, providers and others in the public and private sectors to achieve its primary strategic goal - to eliminate health disparities in Pennsylvania.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Edward G. Rendell, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and other laws of the Commonwealth, do hereby create the **Office of Health Equity** (hereinafter referred to as the "Office"), within the Department of Health, and the **Office of Health Equity Advisory Committee** and do order and direct as follows:

## **1. Office of Health Equity.**

**a. Establishment.** The Office of Health Equity is hereby established within the Department of Health.

**b. Infrastructure.** The infrastructure of the Office shall, at a minimum, include the Director of the Office and appropriate staff.

**c. Responsibilities.** The responsibilities of the Office shall be the following:

(1) Provide leadership to increase public awareness of health disparities in Pennsylvania.

(2) Advocate for the development of programs to address health disparities.

(3) Work with policy makers, insurers, health care providers and communities to implement policies and programs that result in a measurable and sustained improvement in health status of underserved and disparate populations.

(4) Continue collaboration with state agencies, academic institutions, community based organizations, health partners, providers and others in the public and private sectors to eliminate health disparities in Pennsylvania.

## **2. Office of Health Equity Advisory Committee.**

**a. Establishment and Membership:** The Health Equity Advisory Committee is hereby established. The membership of the Advisory Committee shall be at the discretion of the Secretary of Health and shall, at a minimum, include representatives of academia, provider community, faith based community and organized representatives of disparate populations.

**b. Powers and Duties.** The Advisory Committee shall have the following duties:

(1) Advise the Secretary of Health on matters concerning health inequalities and recommend actions which are data-driven, evidence-based, and culturally aware; increase public awareness of the existence of health disparities; and mobilize statewide, community and individual actions to eliminate health disparities in Pennsylvania.

(2) Assist in the identification of federal and private foundation funding to support programs that address health disparities.

(3) Assist in identifying the conditions and causes of disparities and prioritizing strategies to address the elimination of health disparities.

(4) Enhance the coordination and support of existing Commonwealth programs, including, but not limited to, the following; the identification of evidence-based practices, provision of advice and guidance about public and private resources, dissemination of information on programs to reduce and eliminate identified disparities and utilization of assessment tools to improve cultural competency of health care providers.

(5) Provide advice and guidance to the Governor through the Office of Health Equity and the Secretary of Health on programs and activities to accelerate the elimination of disparities in the delivery of health care in Pennsylvania.

**3. Responsibilities of Commonwealth Agencies.** All Commonwealth agencies under the jurisdiction of the Governor shall cooperate with the Office of Health Equity to support and promote its mission and goals.

**4. Effective Date:** This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

**5. Termination Date:** This Executive Order shall remain in effect unless revised or rescinded by the Governor.